

# Maryland State Fire Marshal

# News Release

Larry Hogan  
Governor

Brian S. Geraci  
State Fire Marshal



## STATE FIRE MARSHAL PROVIDES WINTER HEATING SAFETY TIPS

**STATEWIDE** (January 5, 2016) – As we are experiencing the first severe cold snap of the year, we depend on multiple types of heating sources to stay warm inside our homes. State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci is providing Marylanders life and home saving heating safety tips. *“Elements of heating resources continue to be a significant factor in home fires in Maryland,”* according to State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci. *“Following these guidelines, we can work together to reduce the number of residential fires.”*

- Ensure chimneys are cleaned annually or more frequently if used as the primary heating source.
- Use properly sized fireplace screens or enclosures. Never use a flammable liquid to start a fire in a fireplace or woodstove.
- When disposing of cooled ashes, do not use paper, cardboard or plastic containers to remove them; instead use a metal container with a lid. Ashes will insulate hot embers long after the fire is considered out.
- Make sure fuel burning stoves are installed according to local fire codes and manufacturer’s instructions.
- Have your furnace inspected and serviced annually.
- Check portable electric heaters for frayed/damaged wires and ensure the appliance is clean and placed on a flat level surface. Use only “listed” appliances by an approved testing laboratory and follow manufacturer’s instructions.
- Do not use extension cords with portable space heaters. The extension cord can overheat and cause a fire.
- If you use kerosene fuel fired heaters, use only “K-1” kerosene fuel. Never fill the unit inside, remove it to the exterior of the structure after it has cooled before refueling. **Note:** Portable kerosene heaters are banned for use in Baltimore City.
- Open a window enough to provide proper ventilation.

- Keep combustibles (furniture, curtains, clothing, paper goods, etc.), at least (3') three feet from all heat sources. Combustibles placed too close can ignite quite easily.
- Fuel burning appliances can produce the deadly, tasteless and odorless gas known as carbon monoxide. Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms inside your home to provide an early warning of carbon monoxide levels.
- Always turn off portable heating equipment when leaving the room for extended periods. Portable heaters should never be operated unattended.
- Place safety barriers around the device to keep children and pets away from the heat source.

Along with these heating tips, check to make sure your smoke alarms and CO detectors are in good working order. These devices should be replaced every 10 years to ensure they operate as early as they are designed. ***“Routine maintenance and safe operation of heating equipment, combined with properly installed and operating smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors, and practicing your home escape plans are a life-saving combination for all Marylanders,”*** stated Geraci.



The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, log onto our website at:

[www.firemarshal.mdsp.gov](http://www.firemarshal.mdsp.gov) and/or <http://facebook.com/MarylandStateFireMarshal>.

Media contact: Bruce D. Bouch, Deputy State Fire Marshal; 443-324-6876



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